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ABSTRACT

As part of a study of the role of relaxation training in the reduction of student test anxiety, a survey of the deans of instruction at 102 California community colleges was conducted to determine the extent to which the colleges were teaching Centering, Meditation, Transcendental Meditation, Hypnotism, Yoga, and Relaxation. For each of these subjects, the survey instrument solicited information on the course name, the percentage of course content actually devoted to the subject matter, the number of credits offered, and the time of day the course was scheduled. Major findings, based upon responses from 72 deans, revealed that 54% of the responding colleges offered courses in one or more of the subjects being considered. The most frequently offered course was Yoga (offered by 37 colleges), followed by Relaxation (23 colleges), Meditation (19 colleges), Hypnosis (5 colleges), Transcendental Meditation (5 colleges), and Centering (4 colleges). Instructors used these techniques to reduce test anxiety at 19 colleges. In addition to a discussion of the survey results, the report provides: (1) a review of the literature dealing with relaxation training in the school setting, (2) comments from selected respondents, and (3) an examination of the legal problems encountered by public institutions because of the religious orientation of Transcendental Meditation and Yoga. A bibliography is included. (JP)

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THE EXTENT TO WHICH RELAXATION TECHNIQUES ARE TAUGHT AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN CALIFORNIA

by

Anne McCormick, M. S.

College of the Sequoias

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A PRACTICUM PRESENTED TO NOVA UNIVERSITY
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ABSTRACT

ARE RELAXATION TECHNIQUES TAUGHT AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN CALIFORNIA

A PRACTICUM FOR NOVA UNIVERSITY PRESENTED BY ANNE McCORMICK

The names of 102 community colleges in California were secured at the writer's college library prior to mailing a survey to these colleges. With the help of several of the writer's colleagues at College of the Sequoias, a survey document was developed to ascertain whether other community colleges in California offered any kinds of relaxation training in their curricular. In developing the instrument it was noted that relaxation goes under many names; hypnotism, meditation, Transcendental Meditation, Yoga, centering and, in all liklihood, many other terms.

The survey instrument and cover letter were accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. The documents were addressed to the deans of instruction at all of the 102 public community colleges in California. After two weeks time, a second mailing was conducted; duplicate documents were mailed to 69 deans of instruction. A third mailing to 52 deans of instruction was made four weeks later and a final mailing four weeks after that went to 30 schools who did not reply to the request.

Seventy-two schools, or 70.6% responded and of that group fifty-four colleges, or 75%, notified us that they did offer their students some form of relaxation training.

The most popular offerings, in descending order, were Yoga, Relaxation, Meditation, Hypnotism, Centering, and Transcendental Meditation.

A relaxation technique for this instructor's students will be developed utilizing the experiences of the respondents to the survey and upon further research in the area.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Not all students take tests well. Many become overly anxious when sitting down to take an examination. Some students who are quite well-prepared literally "freeze" when the time comes for them to perform in a test situation. As a result their self-esteem suffers because they are unable to perform up to their expectations on examinations.

It is possible that training in some form of relaxation prior to a test would alleviate the tension which causes test anxiety in students.

Determining whether or not other schools in California's community college system were teaching some form of relaxation to their students was the purpose of this practicum. It was hoped that if other schools were using relaxation training with their students, we might find out the extent to which this was being done in the state's community college system.

To gather information about the extent to which various relaxation techniques are taught in California public community colleges and what policies regarding such teaching exist, a survey of deans of instruction in the

state's 102 campuses was conducted by mail. Appropriate follow-up procedures were employed to encourage a high return rate.

Chapter 2

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is important to know to what extent relaxation techniques are taught in California community colleges. In examining the education policy systems of schools and their offerings to students the area of relaxation training was considered to be one that needed exploration.

Two writers, Fantino and Reynolds (1975) remark that as the child gets older, social and school-related situations are added to those that are sometimes fearful. They go on to comment that beginning in adolescence, fears of inadequacy in social situations increase, and in some cases, never abate. While we know that a certain amount of anxiety is normal and necessary for survival, Fantino and Reynolds remind us that a particularly healthy form of anxiety is concern for the well-being of others.

Most teachers and parents want to help their students and children develop as whole persons; Hendricks and Wills (1975) feel that centering helps people develop a pool of inner stillness that facilitates appropriate action.

They also state that relaxation is one of the most important skills we can learn.

According to Colligan (1975) feelings of helplessness can lead to more than just disease; loss of control in one's life can end in loss of life itself. Anxiety and stress in a test situation can lead to a helpless feeling on the part of a student. As educators we cannot have our students giving up.

Carrington (1977) suggests that the use of meditation in the school system is likely to increase. She goes on to say that meditation may be rejected by certain groups who feel that there are no forms of meditation which are truly secular. She notes, however, that the United States Navy, has recently endorsed the use of Benson's meditation techniques (taught by one of its own staff members) in a program of Leadership and Management Training for Navy recruits at San Diego.

Hypnosis, which might be another name for meditation and relaxation has come a long way from the parlor magic of Franz Anton Mesmer and his theory of animal magnetism. Hilgard (1974) states that hypnosis works.

Bergland and Chal (1972) reported a case history of a student who had been one of his school's most notorious troublemakers. This student was given relaxation training after which he learned how to control his own behavior to

the extent that significant changes were noted both by himself and by his teachers. Bergland and Chal indicate that there may be some potential usefulness in the application of relaxation procedures in school and counseling settings.

Melnick and Russell (1976) stated that several factors may influence lack of improvement in exam scores following reported reductions in anxiety. Discrepancies with respect to academic performance may reflect the uncontrolled influence of generalized or free-floating anxiety. Relaxation treatments may not have time enough to be reflected in academic performance for the semester in which treatment takes place. Furthermore, they state that students with reduced test anxiety may no longer be motivated by fear to study for examinations. Consequently one cannot be certain that results of treatment may be evidenced when one expects the results.

The data supporting hypnosis as an effective technique in treating test anxiety according to Malnick and Russell are not as abundant or well-controlled as data favoring systematic desensitization; however, they are still highly supportive. A study reported by Malnick and Russell found that school children receiving hypnosis showed significant gains in reading skills when compared to control subjects who received a standard remedial reading program. They also reported the successful use of hypnosis in the treatment of examination anxiety with college students.

Relaxation goes under many names; hypnotism, TM or Transcendental Meditation, Yoga, Centering and many other terms. However, under whatever name relaxation techniques go, the possibility that they may be beneficial in an educational setting makes it important for educators to know more about them.

Most administrators, according to Halpin (1958), develop skillful techniques to secure support for the programs they initiate. This is important in education as is some promotional ability on the part of an administrator. We are curious as to how administrators report on the extent to which relaxation techniques are being used in community colleges in California. Also because some relaxation techniques have religious connotations, the writer was interested in the colleges' policies rregarding their inclusion in publicly supported institutions' curricula.

Chapter 3

PROCEDURES

In preparing to contact public community colleges in California regarding the use of relaxation instruction at their schools, a list of 102 such schools was obtained at the College of the Sequoias library.

It was determined that a survey would be conducted by mail to determine how many community colleges in California offered courses in relaxation techniques and what policies

regarding these courses exist on their campuses.

With the assistance of colleagues at College of the Sequoias, an initially developed survey was redesigned. In the process of developing the document it was noted that relaxation goes under other names such as hypnotism, Transcendental Meditation, meditation, Yoga, centering and very likely many other terms. Various faculty members who are familiar with relaxation techniques reviewed the survey to insure the information being sought would be elicited by the document. In order to establish validity, a panel of knowledgable people were contacted. The survey was read by seven members of the college staff and on the basis of their examination of the survey, some recommended changes in wording were made to clarify the meaning. The revised survey instrument was felt to be capable of eliciting the information wanted. Reliablity was established by administering the document to a group of eight people and examining split halves. It was decided that the document proved to be reliable. Because this is a survey instrument there will be no statistical calculations.

The document and cover letter may be found in the Appendix. The documents and a self-addressed stamped envelope were mailed to the deans of instruction at all of the 102 community colleges in California. After two weeks time, a second mailing was conducted; duplicate documents were mailed to 69 deans of instruction. A third mailing to

52 deans of instruction was made four weeks later and a final mailing four weeks after that went to 30 schools who did not reply to the questionnaire.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

CENTERING:	The process of psychological integration. To have the intellect and the intuition working in unison. To concentrate.
HYPNOSIS:	A state that resembles sleep but is induced by a hypnotiser whose suggestions are readily accepted by the subject.
MEDITATION:	A contemplative exercise by which a person produces a state of relaxation by focusing attention on a picture, a repeated sound or phrase or question, a mental image, etc.
RELAXATION:	A state of emotional and physical calm.
TM:	(Transcendental Meditation) A philosophy that asserts the primacy of the spiritual and transcendental over the material and empirical.
YOGA:	A system of exercises for attaining bodily or mental control and well-being. Also a Hindu theistic philosophy.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Thirty-three completed survey documents were returned to the writer within a two week period fof time. At the end of that time a second mailing was conducted. Duplicate documents and envelopes were mailed to the 60 deans of instruction from whom no reply had come. A third mailing to 52 deans of instruction was made four weeks later and a final mailing four weeks after that went to the deans of instruction at the 30 schools which did not reply. A total of 72 or 70.6% of the survey instruments were completed and returned.

The possibility of developing a relaxation technique to be taught to students will be dependent upon answers from these colleges. Results were tabulated and colleges that appeared to be actively involved with these types of instruction were contacted both by letter and telephone.

Fifty-four of those replying reported that they did offer one or several courses or instruction in the areas inquired about. Seventy-five percent of the respondents indicated that students at their colleges were offered some form of relaxation training.

In Table I, the data on proportions of course content which are devoted to the various relaxation techniques and their college credit status are presented. Information regarding the numbers of relaxation course offered in the daytime and evening is shown in Table II.

Four colleges reported that they offered centering training. Centering content of the courses varied from a minimal to 1/4 to 1/2, to 1/2 to 3/4 and 3/4 and over. It was offered for credit with two colleges supplying one unit of credit, one two units and one three units (T

Centering had been taught at these four schools from one to eight years with the mean being 3.75 years. The course was offered both in day and evening classes.

Meditation has been offered at nineteen colleges with one-third of the offerings providing less than 1/4 the course content, one-third providing 1/4 to 1/2 of the course content and the remaining third providing 3/4 and over the course content. Meditation is offered for from one to three units with the mean being 1.28 units. In four cases it is offered for no credit.

Twelve sections are offered during the day and nine at night. It has been offered for from one to six years with the mean being 2.214 years taught at the colleges.

Four schools offer Transcendental Meditation for no credit. Two of the classes offer it as less than 1/4 the course content, one offers it for 1/4 to 1/2 the course

content and one for 3/4 and over the course content.

Transcendental Meditation has only been offered for one year. Two session of T. M. are taught in the day and two in the evening.

Hypnotism is taught at five colleges with two colleges offering it as less than 1/4 the course content, two colleges as 1/4 to 1/2 the course content and one college as 3/4 or more of the course content. It is offered for both two and three units and also for no credit. Five sessions are held during the day and five during the evening. It has been taught an average of 1.66 years at these schools.

Yoga is offered at thirty-seven community colleges with five providing less than 1/4 the course content, six offering 1/4 to 1/2 the course content and twenty-six as 3/4 or more of the course content. It is offered for from one-half to three units with the mean being 1.05. In seven cases it is offered for no credit. Twenty-five sections are offered during the day and twenty-four during the evening. Yoga has been offered anywhere from one to six years with the mean being 3.47 years.

Relaxation is taught at twenty-three of the colleges. Twelve of the colleges offer it as less than 1/4 of the course content. Four colleges offer it as 1/4 to 1/2 the course content. Two as 1/2 to 3/4 of the course content

and five colleges offer it as 3/4 and over of the course content. It is offered with one-half to three units credit with the average being 1.75. Two colleges offer it for no credit.

Thirteen day sessions are reported and twelve evening sessions. It has been taught for from one to ten years with the mean being 2.69.

TABLE I

TYPES OF RELAXATION TRAINING AND CREDIT GRANTED AT CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES (N=72)

TYPES OF TRAINING	PERCENT OF COURSE CONTENT Under 1/4	1/4 to 1/2	1/2 to 3/4	3/4 and over	CREDIT	NON-CREDIT
CENTERING	1	1	1	1	4	0
MEDITATION	6	7	0	6	15	4
TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION	2	1	0	1	0	4
HYPNOTISM	2	2	0	1	4	1
YOGA	5	6	0	26	30	7
RELAXATION	12	4	2	5	20	3
TOTALS	28	21	3	40	73	19

*Totals may not tally because of overlapping course offerings

TABLE II

TIME OF COURSE OFFERINGS

TYPES OF TRAINING	NUMBER OF COURSE OFFERINGS	DAYTIME	EVENING
CENTERING	4	4	4
MEDITATION	19	12	9
TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION	4	2	2
HYPNOTISM	5	5	5
YOGA	37	25	24
RELAXATION	23	13	12
TOTALS	92	61	56

*Totals may not tally because some courses offered in both day and evening division.

Fifty-four, or seventy-five percent, of the colleges reported in the affirmative that they offer a variety of ninety-two courses. Nineteen of those reporting indicated that instructors at their colleges use these techniques to reduce test anxiety in their students and fifteen reported they did not use these methods to reduce test anxiety.

In the course of the investigation the writer corresponded, engaged in telephone conversations, and visited with some of the respondents to the survey document. Some information that came to light is included here:

The Board of Trustees of Ohlone College questioned Dr. Neil McCallum, then Acting Superintendent President whether meditation or Yoga could be taught in a public college. The county counsel prepared an eleven page document; Dr. McCallum reported the following conclusions;

1. The meditation course in question at Ohlone is not religious in nature and hence, the teaching of it does not violate the State or Federal Constitution or any other law.

2. Yoga is a Hindu religious philosophy and cannot be taught or practiced in public schools and colleges without breaching the wall separating church and state.

The counsel went on to state that

> Whether the teaching of said course constitutes a violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment or of the California Constitution presents a legal question (Malnak v. Yogi (1977), 440 Fed. Supp. 1284, 1303.)
>
> In Malnak v. Yogi it was held that the Science of Creative Intelligence and Transcendental Meditation (SCI/TM) as preached by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Guru Dev constituted a religion as a matter of law and that the teachings of SCI/TM (coupled with the Puja, a religious rite, conducted with pupils off the school premises on Sundays) as an elective course in public high schools in New Jersey violated the U. S. constitution.

Within the framework of this study it was found that all Yoga classes are given by the Physical Education Departments and their catalog course descriptions are similar to the following from Citrus College:

> "Neuro-muscular exercises to gain control over breath, muscle, and mind to strengthen, firm, tone and shape the body on more youthful lines."

Meditation is taught at twenty-three colleges with apparent success and interest. An instructor at Cabrillo College commented that: "I've had more students enrolling than I can handle. I have wanted to teach more than one section, but it has not been politically realistic, given the post-Jarvis atmosphere." Course content Objectives for some of the meditation classes include an overview of methods and techniques of mind development such as autogenic training, meditation, relaxation, and biofeedback. Another objective often included is that students learn techniques that will enable them to take greater responsibility for their own development and well-being. Many colleges and instructors use meditation in controlling test anxiety and in stress and relaxation. The religious aspects of Transcendental Meditation rarely are emphasized.

Twenty-three colleges offer relaxation training and comments made in response to the survey document include a statement from Steve Morehouse of Porterville Community College to the effect that:

> "Students seem to enjoy the process and find it helpful. also they like the fact that this type of training can be used to help deal with other forms of anxiety."

Dr. Barbara K. Sawyers at Southwestern College, whose teaching includes biofeedback wrote that:

> "The classes have been very successful in terms of both student interest and in successful application of the procedures."

The Dean of Instruction at Diablo Valley College, John G. Kelly, obviously speaks not only for his own school but for the majority of California community colleges when he wrote:

> "Various forms of relaxation are taught in psychology, health science, speech and physical education courses. We avoid T. M. and any religious form of Yoga; otherwise I suspect all of the styles you mention occur in one teacher's section or another."

It was rewarding to find that colleagues in other institutions were willing to share their experiences with relaxation, meditation and Yoga curriculum.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was felt that if we knew to what extent other public community colleges in California offered training in relaxation techniques we would have a point of reference from which we could establish such training at the College of the Sequoias.

It was gratifying to receive a 70.6% return from the 102 survey instruments mailed to California community colleges. The fact that 75% or fifty-four of the colleges replying actually did include some kind of relaxation training in their curriculum was most edifying.

It was found that Yoga was by far the most popular offering, but certainly the Yoga courses offered must not be religious instruction. College of the Sequoias is already offering Yoga instruction in the evening session; the course carries no religious connotation. Physical education instructor Jean Shewey commented that students enjoy this class.

Training in relaxation was found to be reported as the technique taught most frequently after Yoga. Relaxation training was given to students as course content as well as being used in a counseling situation. Many positive results, according to Sheldon Smith of Orange Coast College, have been attained by students engaging in relaxation training.

The third most popular offering was found to be Meditation which is described sometimes as "advanced relaxation." Because of the religious connotation and the secrecy involved in the teaching of Transcendental Meditation, and the fact that one must be taught by a person trained under the aegis of Maharishi International University, and not only because the fees are $75 to $150 or more, most public schools have

avoided T. M. per se. The majority of the meditation courses are not religious in nature and therefore do not violate the Constitution.

With the information gained from this survey this instructor plans to develop a relaxation program for her students. A relaxation technique will be developed utilizing the experiences of the respondents to the survey and upon further research in the area.

It is hoped that anxious students could be relaxed so that they might perform better in a test situation. Less anxious students will allow the college to serve its clientele better and the educational process will be improved.

A copy of this document will be forwarded to the Dean of Instruction at College of the Sequoias.

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APPENDIX A

COLLEGE OF THE SEQUOIAS

915 SO. MOONEY BOULEVARD - VISALIA, CALIFORNIA 93277
TELEPHONE (209) 733-2050

May 10, 1978

Dean of Instruction

Dear Sir:

I am in the process of developing a course outline for our college. My interest is in reducing test anxiety in students. In researching the project it appears that many methods may be used in attaining this goal. However, the problem now is to select the method that will prove most beneficial to the students.

Knowledge of your college's experience in this area would be of great help to us.

I would appreciate your completing the enclosed form and mailing it back to me in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

Very truly yours,

Anne McCormick

Mrs. Anne McCormick
Home Economics Department

IVAN C. CROOKSHANKS, Superintendent/President - LINCOLN H. HALL, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction - VERNON J. SILVA, Vice President, Student Personnel Services
RICHARD C. JACOBSEN, Vice President, Business - LeROY A. BERG, Vice President, Evening College - BILL BETTENCOURT, Dean of Men
LOIS A. HOPKINS, Dean of Women - JAY G. QUINN, Dean of Special Student Services - JOSEPH A. GUARISCO, Dean of Vocational Education

From: Anne McCormick, College of the Sequoias, 915 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia, Ca. 93277

Do you have a course at your college which includes the use of any of the following? If so, we would appreciate your so indicating in the appropriate boxes.

TYPE OF TRAINING	WHAT PERCENT OF COURSE CONTENT				COURSE NAME	NUMBER OF UNITS	NON-CREDIT	DAY	EVENING	HOW LONG TAUGHT AT COLLEGE
	under 1/4	1/4 to 1/2	1/2 to 3/4	3/4 and over						
CENTERING										
MEDITATION										
TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION										
HYPNOTISM										
YOGA										
RELAXATION										

Can you supply names of instructors who use these techniques to reduce test anxiety in students?

_____

We would appreciate comments as to the success of such classes or instruction._____

_____

_____

If possible, would you provide us with a copy of the course outline for said class.

Your Name_____Title_____College_____

APPENDIX C

Some of the comments from respondents to the survey instrument include the following:

Joseph T. Steinke, chairperson of Human Studies and Services at Ohlone College notes that meditation has been overwhelmingly received. They have had 200 students in 2 quarters. The class is taught by Dr. George Palath and the response to the class has been excellent.

At Los Angeles Pierce College they do not give exams but note that the non-credit classes geared for the community are highly successful.

Meditation has been a new offering at Modesto Junior College and has received mixed reactions.

At Cabrillo College David Warren has taught meditation for two years. He says "I feel that my approach is appealing. It is not dogmatic, religious or mystical. I consider meditation a mental skill. (An art form with a rational approach.) I start with relaxation and move into meditation as 'advanced relaxation.' Meditation techniques are introduced as they apply to the various sense receptors."

Marianna Adams teaches psychology of mind development at Butte Community College. This course is an overview of methods and techniques of mind development such as autogenic training, meditation, relaxation, biofeedback and jogging. She has taught several sections for six years and notes that the interest is high on the part of regular students and the general public. Subjective reports indicate great benefits from the course.

Psychology 265 at San Diego Community College covers meditation and self-reflection.

A two unit workshop on meditation which includes Zen Buddhism, other meditation techniques and the application to psychology and psycho-therapy are offered as weekend workshops at College of the Redwoods.

At De Anza College Karen Shaver uses centering, meditation and relaxation in several human development courses. She notes that others at her school use it in psychosynthesis. They use it in controlling test anxiety and in stress and relaxation.

Dr. Barbara K. Sawyers at Southwestern College has been teaching biofeedback and parapsychology for two and three years respectively. "The classes have been very successful in terms of both student interest andin successful application of the procedures." writes Dr. Sawyers. She has been of great assistance in providing bio-feedback literature and has offered to work with the writer in developing courses.

College of the Siskiyous has offered a three unit course for the past three years in meditation and mysticism which requires a half an hour each day in the campus meditation room.

Bliss Bellinger at Indian Valley College offers a non-credit meditation and relaxation course which provides a basic introduction to the "why and hows" of meditation and relaxation. The course is intended for those who have been thinking of getting into meditation and/or finding an alternative to the daily stress/tension build-up. The course presents an eclectic range of meditational theories and methods rather than any one-way approach. East and West, ancient and modern techniques are discussed and practiced in class. The sessions include theory, approaches, practice sessions, group discussion.

Sheldon Smith at Orange Coast College has been offering expansion courses for four years. He was kind enough to share much of his materials with me. The writer spent several days attending sessions with him and some of his students.

Hypnotism is offered at very few of California's community colleges. De Anza College offers a non-credit course in self-hypnosis. Other schools that offer training in hypnotism include Butte Community College, San Joaquin Delta, Los Angeles Valley College and Orange Coast College. Ron Green of College of the Desert, who is Director of Guidance, uses hypnotism in his counseling. The writer talked with Mr. Green at some length and he was kind enough to share one of the tapes he uses in his counseling.

The Yoga classes offered by the California schools have catalog course descriptions similar to this one from Citrus College: "Neuro-muscular exercises to gain control over breath, muscle, and mind to strengthen, firm, tone and shape the body on more youthful lines."

Yoga classes are all given by the Physical Education Departments. The comments are that they are very popular; many have been in existence for five years. At Monterey Peninsula College seven sections are offered. They are given for credit/no-credit and are available both during the day and evening.

Twenty-three colleges offer relaxation training. Steve Morehouse of Porterville Community College comments, "Students seem to enjoy the process and find it helpful. Also they like the fact that this type of training can be used to help deal with other forms of anxiety.

Sheldon Smith of Orange Coast teaches relaxation courses in the school and in privat practice, "both," he comments are very successful and rewarding."

Modesto Junior College notes that the study skills course is notable even though there is mixed reaction.

A number of colleges shared course outlines with the writer. It is rewarding to find that colleagues in other institutions are willing to share their experiences with relaxation, meditation and Yoga curriculum.

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